

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, March 21, 2003*

## MPDC ON HEIGHTENED ALERT AS WAR ON IRAQ BEGINS

The MPDC went on a heightened state of alert this week, extending officers' tours of duty, activating the Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) and enhancing police presence both at critical installations and in DC neighborhoods. On Monday night, the Department raised its emergency response level from Level I to Level II (Level III being the MPDC's highest level). This coincided with the decision on Monday by the Department of Homeland Security to raise the national threat level from Elevated (Yellow) to High (Orange), in anticipation of the war on Iraq. The MPDC activated its JOCC, including the network of 14 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras that focus primarily on downtown DC. With the beginning of the war, Chief Ramsey took the additional steps of putting all sworn members on 12-hour shifts and restricting leave and days off. In addition, the MPDC has deployed three additional CCTV cameras on a temporary basis, focused primarily on the Potomac River bridges and other key locations. Chief Ramsey said the additional resources are required for three critical operational needs: to help prevent and respond to any possible terrorist strike in the District, to manage anti-war demonstrations in the city, and to enhance regular police patrols in DC neighborhoods.

- ① For more information, including helpful links, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=1986>
- ① The public may submit written comments about the CCTV system to the Chief of Police, Metropolitan Police Department, 300 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 5080, Washington, DC, 20001, or via email at [chief@mpdc.org](mailto:chief@mpdc.org).
- ① Mental health professionals at the DC Department of Mental Health Access HelpLine — (888) 7WE-HELP — are available to talk with children and adults about their concerns stemming from the heightened alert in the District of Columbia.

## NEW PROGRAM AIMS TO ENGAGE DC YOUTH IN COMMUNITY POLICING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Getting young people actively involved in neighborhood problem-solving and community-building projects is the goal of a new MPDC community policing initiative. The Youth Problem-Solving Program (YPSP) will pair up teams of DC youth with community organizers and professional mentors to carry out a number of community-based projects that will build the leadership skills of the young people, assist them in taking on civic responsibility and improve the safety of their neighborhoods. The YPSP program is open to DC residents ages 14-18; participants can earn up to 100 hours of community service for school. Over the spring and summer, participants in the YPSP program will learn the five-step problem-solving process that is a central component of the MPDC's Policing for Prevention community policing strategy. The young people and their adult partners will then use their new problem-solving skills in carrying out a variety of projects designed to improve the quality of life in DC neighborhoods. The YPSP program is funded through a local law enforcement block grant awarded to the MPDC by the US Department of Justice.

- ① Learn more about this exciting initiative at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/ypsp.shtml>
- ① The MPDC kicks off the new YPSP program this Saturday during a day-long conference at George Washington University. There are still openings for this event; interested youth or their parents should contact the MPDC's Policing for Prevention Unit at 727-8753.

## CHIEF RAMSEY UPDATES CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION ON POLICE-LATINO COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Chief Ramsey joined other DC government officials this week in testifying before the US Civil Rights Commission on the state of Latino affairs in the District. Calling the 1991 disturbances in Mt. Pleasant as a low point in relations between DC's Latino communities and the MPDC, the Chief said he has made strengthening these relations a priority over the past five years, with measurable success. The Chief outlined reform efforts in the area of recruiting and hiring, including the recent program for hiring experienced bilingual officers from Puerto Rico. He said Latinos now represent 5.7 percent of the MPDC's sworn strength, compared with 2.7 percent in 1991. Ramsey also updated the Commission on police deployment initiatives, including the establishment last summer of the MPDC's Latino Liaison Unit. He described various innovative community outreach efforts, such as the "home visits" program that is helping to break down barriers and build trust between Latino residents and police. Finally, Chief Ramsey described the MPDC's success in reforming use-of-force policies, training and investigations, as well as other police integrity issues affecting DC's Latino communities.

- ① Read the Chief's complete statement before the Commission at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/stmts/2003/03/032103.shtm>
- ① To learn more about the programs and services offered by the MPDC's Latino Liaison Unit, call (202) 673-4445 or visit:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/units/llu.shtm>

## MPDC RECRUITING FOR 9-1-1 COMMUNICATIONS OPERATORS

The MPDC is currently recruiting for a number of police communications operators to work in the District's Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC). The latest recruitment includes a position for a bilingual operator who speaks English and Spanish, as well as several openings for English-only operators. Following training, police communications operators provide assistance to senior communications operators (or dispatchers) in running computer checks, responding to inquiries from the field, and providing relief. Eventually, these civilian personnel can move up to call-taker positions, in which they answer both 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 calls that come into the PSCC, or dispatchers, who provide vital radio communications to police units in the field. The salary range for the positions is \$30,129-\$37,877 per year. They remain open through the end of March.

- ① For complete details on these job vacancies, including information on how to apply, go on-line to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/civilian.shtm>
- ① For information about other career and volunteer opportunities in the MPDC, click on:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ.shtm>

## NEWS & NOTES

**DC Marathon Canceled.** Organizers of the Washington DC Marathon announced that the 2003 race has been canceled "due to security issues." As a result, no marathon-related traffic restrictions will be in effect this weekend.

**2003 Boating Safety Classes.** Again this year, the MPDC's Harbor Patrol Unit is offering Boating Safety Courses that are required for individuals to receive a Boating Safety Certificate. Get complete details at: [http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/harborclasses\\_03.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/harborclasses_03.shtm)

**Cafritz Awards for Outstanding Employees.** Members of the community are invited to nominate an outstanding employee from the MPDC (or any DC government agency) for the 2003 Cafritz Foundation Awards for Distinguished DC Government Employees. The deadline for nominations is April 2. Get complete details, including a copy of the one-page nomination form, on the DC Agenda website: <http://www.dcagenda.org>

### DATA BOX

#### Homicides (as of 3/21/03)

- 2003: 49
- 2002: 51
- % Change: -3.9%

#### Arrests (week ending 3/15/03)

- Total: 870
- Drugs: 108

#### Firearm Recoveries (as of 3/18/03)

- Total: 413
- March: 88

#### Traffic Fatalities (as of 3/21/03)

- 2003: 7
- 2002: 14
- % Change: -50.0%